RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 24th August, 2007/2 *Bhadrapada,* 1929 *(Saka)*

The House met at eleven of the clock,
MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Deep sea fishery

*181. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards media report that the fish landing along Indian coast is slowing [illegible]

(b) if so, the response [illegible] Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute in this regard;

(c) what are the reasons for decline of catches;

(d) whether Government would respond speedily to solving the problems of the deep-sea fishery sector;

(e) if so, the measures proposed to remove hurdles to proper exploitation of tuna and other species; and

(f) the steps proposed for a pro-active policy to encourage deep-sea fishing?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) The Government is aware of some of the reports which appeared in the media about the declining marine fish catches along the Indian coast. The CMFRI has confirmed that no decline has been observed in the total marine fish production of the country. As per the production statistics maintained by the Government, the fish production, which stood at about 23 lakh tonnes during 1990, grew to 27 lakh tonnes by 1995 and touched 29.9 lakh tonnes during 2002. Thereafter the production has steadied at about 28-29 lakh tonnes except for a slight decline during the year that immediately followed tsunami. Slight fluctuation from year to year is common in the case of marine capture fisheries, where pelagic resources account for a substantial quantity and these pelagic stocks are

vulnerable to oceanographic changes brought about by climate, pollution, and human factors such as over fishing. A profile of the marine fish production of the country for the 1950-2006 period is furnished in the .Statement (*See* below).

(d) The problems faced by the deep-sea fishery sector were debated in the Consultative Committee of Members of Parliament for Ministry of Agriculture in May 2007 and were subsequently discussed in detail with the industry representatives by the Government in July, 2007. The Inter-Ministerial Empowered Committee would consider the various issues flagged in these meetings shortly and action would be initiated. by the Government on their advice.

(e) The major hurdles in proper exploitation of tuna and other species in our waters are (i) lack of inadequate number of purpose-built fishing boats, (ii) lack of trained officers and crew in tuna fishing, (iii) non-availability of institutional finance to support capital and operating expenses, and (iv) lack of adequate terminal facilities required for hygienic and efficient handling of tuna upon landing. In order to remove these hurdles the Government has embarked upon the following measures:

(i) Allowing Indian entrepreneurs to acquire purpose-built tuna fishing vessels through import,

(ii) To encourage conversion of deep-sea trawlers into long liners by providing cash subsidy,

(iii) To encourage small and medium trawlers of less than 20m length into tuna long lining through grant of registration to fish in the EEZ,

(iv) To permit import of long liners through deferred payment system,

(v) To permit up to 75% foreign crew initially on board tuna vessels so that lack of trained crew is not a hindrance in undertaking deep-sea fishing operations,

(vi) To gear up training of operatives in tuna fishing by augmenting the facilities available with the fishery institutions,

(vii) To construct modern fishery harbours and also to improve the facilities at the existing ones to meet the special requirement of the tuna industry,

(viii) To encourage joint venture in tuna fishing sector.

(f) The present policy for deep-sea fishing has been conceived after a study of the implications of a stand-alone policy for deep-sea fishing on the livelihood issues of coastal communities and on the sustainability of our living resources. Besides, the global and regional commitments in management and conservation of marine fisheries are also enshrined in the policy. As such the present policy is pro-active and aims at a balanced development of both the coastal and deep-sea sectors. The policy is open to further improvement after it is implemented for a reasonable length of time.

Statement

Marine fish production in India - 1950-51 to 2005-06

Year	Marine Fish Production ('000 tonnes)	Average Annual Growth Rate %
1950-51	534	–
1955-56	596	2.32
1960-61	880	9.53
1965-66	824	-1.27
1970-71	1086	6.36
1973-74	1210	3.81
1978-79	1490	4.63
1979-80	1492	0.13
1980-81	1555	4.22
1981-82	1445	-7.07
1982-83	1427	-1.25
1983-84	1519	6.45
1984-85	1698	11.78
1985-86	1716	1.06
1986-87	1713	-0.17
1987-88	1658	-3.21
1988-89	1817	9.59
1989-90	2275	25.21
1990-91	2300	1.10
1991-92	2447	6.39
1992-93	2576	5.27
1993-94	2649	2.83
1994-95	2692	1.62
1995-96	2707	0.56
1996-97	2967	9.60
1997-98	2950	-0.57
1998-99	2696	-8.61
1999-00	2852	5.79
2000-01	2811	-1.44
2001-02	2830	0.68
2002-03	2990	5.65
2003-04	2941	-1.64
2004-05	2779	-5.51
2005-06	2816	1.33

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 181. Shri V. Hanumantha Rao.

SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Sir, let me first thank you for taking some steps in the last six months to help the Tuna fishing industry. India has hardly 20 Tuna boats while other countries using Indian Ocean have thousands. In the last three years, the number of Tuna boats in India has remained the same. In your answer, you mentioned that Ministry and Fishing Industry had discussion in July, 2007 to solve the problem. We are now reaching September. Why is there a delay in holding an Empowered Committee meeting of fisheries? What are the reasons for such a delay? In part (e) of your answer, you kindly agreed that Indian crew is not available. Then, why don't you allow them to hire anyone they want? Why do you insist on impossible conditions? Sir, my first question is: I would like to know when Empowered Committee would meet and solve prpblems. Can you please issue orders to solve the problems as they are dragging on for three years? I know that if you kindly look into it, it will be done immediately.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Meeting of the Empowered Committee has been called on 10th of September. It is scheduled. It is 10th of September only. So, I don't think there will be any delay. The second important question has been asked. This particular issue has been discussed in the Consultative Committee and has been discussed when there was a meeting with industry to interact on various issues. So, this particular programme was raised also in that meeting. Government of India's policy was, those who are going to import new vessels can appoint 100 per cent staff from outside India. But, every year, they have to bring at least 25 per cent staff from India, within India. So, out of 100, they have to practically keep 25 per cent seats vacant and they should induct Indians. About two years back, we got a request from industry. It is not possible to bring 25 per cent staff from India. We are not getting people. There are no trained personnel available in India. That is why the percentage should be brought down. So, 25 per cent has been dropped to 15 per cent. So, that type of facility has been given to industry. We feel that we should encourage local people; Indian staff and we should encourage them to go to training institutes. In fact, Government of India is running some institute. We had given opportunity to local people. Our expectation is that they should be trained and they should join and we should not depend on foreigners in a big way.

SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Sir, my second supplementary is (a) India has only 20 Tuna boats. Other countries have thousands of boats. Yet, the Fishery Survey of India has dragged the Ministry and Industry into the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission controversy. Industry does not want to obey IOTC for another five years. Some officers are linking policy with obeying IOTC. There should be no linkage with IOTC. I would like to know whether hon. Minister will ensure that Indian Industry will not be forced to obey a foreign industry dominated IOTC and that the Ministry will directly deal with IOTC, remove the Fishery Survey of India, which has become an advocate of IOTC. We have 20 Tuna boats. Why should Ministry support foreign countries in IOTC? If you develop fisheries, millions of people and youth and fishermen will benefit.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, this is regarding setting up of IOTC. The decision has been taken at FAO XI. There are a number of countries associated with it.

Unless and until there is a sufficient coordination on various issues, especially about fishing, it will be very difficult to maintain the stock. So, it was a conscious decision by many countries that we should set up some organisation or some platform which will look into this type of issues. That is the reason why the IOTC has been set up. India is a Member of the IOTC from its inception. When we sit in the international forum, certain decisions are taken in such forum and they are applicable to all the countries. Sometimes, it might create a little problem for us. But, in the larger interest of industry and the country, we have to associate with this. If we are going to disassociate ourselves from the IOTC, I think, we will be isolated and there may be serious problem for Indian producers when they enter into the international market.

श्री एस.एम. लालजन बाशा: चेयरमेन सर, आपके माध्यम से मैं मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि जितनी भी बाहर के कंट्रीज से Tuna boats आती हैं, तो उसमें हमारी एक कंडीशन होती है कि बोट में हमारे 25 परसेंट एम्प्लोइज रहने हैं और चूंकि सर, यह टूना बोट समुद्र में छः-छः महीने, एक-एक साल रहती है, इसलिए हमारे लोग बोट में अंदर जाकर काम करने के लिए ज्यादा इंटरेस्टेड नहीं हो रहे हैं। चूंकि आप सीनियर मोस्ट मिनिस्टर हैं और आप इसकी सभी प्रोब्लम जानते भी हैं और इसमें कुछ खामी भी हैं। इसलिए मेरी आपसे गुजारिश है कि छोटे-छोटे कंट्रीज की भी वहां हजारों बोट हैं और हमारे इंडिया की सिर्फ 20 बोट हैं। इसलिए अगर आप उनका encouragement कर पांच साल का टाइम देंगे तो अच्छा माहौल बन सकता है। इससे एम्प्लोयमेंट भी जेनरेट होगा।

श्री शरद पवार: मैंने जैसा कहा कि इसमें एक बार टाइम बढ़ाने का काम किया गया है। इसमें गवर्नमेंट की इतनी ही नीति है कि जिस क्षेत्र मं हिन्दुस्तानी काम कर सकते हैं उनको मौका देने की आवश्यकता है। इस जगह पर हम 100 परसेंट सिर्फ विदेशी लोगों को लेने का काम करेंगे, तो मुझे नहीं लगता कि यहां की जो समस्या है, चाहे एम्प्लोयमेंट की समस्या हो या चाहे अन्य समस्या हो, इसके लिए यह मददगार होगी। यह बात सच है कि दिन-पर-दिन इसमें ज्यादा लोग जाना चाहते हैं, ज्यादा वेसल्स परचेस करना चाहते हैं और इस समय इतना ट्रेंड हिन्दुस्तानी पर्सोनल अवेलेबल नहीं है और इसीलिए विदेशी रिक्रूटमेंट की इजाजत दी गई है। मैं इस बारे में फिशिंग इण्डस्ट्री के साथ बैठकर इसके टाइम टेबल में कोई बदलाव करने की आवश्यकता हो तो इस पर देखने के लिए तैयार हूं, जिससे ज्यादा लोग इस क्षेत्र में आएंगे, टूना की ज्यादा फिशिंग बढ़ेगी और इसका फायदा हमारे देश को ज्यादा होगा। इसलिए आज का जो परसेंटेज है वह नीचे लाने की आवश्यकता है। तो इस बारे में भी हमारी तरफ से सोचने की तैयारी है।

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, India is having nearly 3 million sq. kms. of Exclusive Economic Zone. But, from the hon. Minister's reply it is clear that the number of tuna fishing vessels that we are having is only 20. We are, according to the Minister, a member of the IOTC. Other members of the IOTC are having Tuna Boats to the extent of hundreds and thousands. We are sitting with them and enforcing the rules and regulations made by the IOTC. It is not a level playing field. Because you implement the IOTC regulations, our boatowners are handicapped. In addition to that, there is a large possibility of those Tuna Boats of IOTC members poaching into our EEZ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question please.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: What are you going to do to prevent this, and to see that we also come at a level-playing field with other members of the IOTC?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: As I said, India is a Member of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). There are some agreed rules and those rules are applicable to all countries. It is true that there are very few players from the Indian side. But there are a number of other countries, like, Australia, China, France, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, etc., which are also in the same line. They have got a little more number. That's why they are getting a little more advantage. We have to change this situation and that is why the Government of India has taken a number of decisions. For instance, allowing Indian entrepreneurs to acquire Purpose-Bill-Tuna fishing vessels through import, import has been totally allowed; to encourage conversion of the deep sea travel into long vessel by providing cash subsidy up to 25 per cent to encourage small and medium trawlers to less than 20 meters length into tuna long lining through grant of registration to fish in the EEZ; to permit import of the long liners through the deferred payment system. Like that, a number of decisions have been taken by the Government of India. But the real problem seems to be non-availability of the Hindustani trained personnel. That is why, as I said, I am ready to look into the matter and give a little bit more concession where they can employ even the outsiders and go in a big way.

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया: सभापति जी, मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि उन्होंने अभी बताया कि they are allowing Indian entrepreneurs to acquire Purpose-Bill-Tuna fishing vessels through import. आज तक इस पालिसी को OGL में लाने के बाद कितने ऐसे परपज, बिल, टूना फिशिंग वैसल्स खरीदे गये। मैं दूसरी तरफ ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहूंगा कि आपने कहा कि हमारे पास ट्रेंड लोगों का अभाव है। अभाव होने का मूल कारण है कि जब यह यू.एन. कन्वेंशन के तहत एक्सक्लूसिव इकोनोमिक जोन डिक्लेयर हुआ था, उस वक्त हमने ओसियन डवलेपमेंट में बहुत सारी चीजों, का, जैसे हमने ओसियन्स में माइनिंग करने के लिए poly-metallic nodules की ट्रेनिंग के लिए इंस्टीट्यूट खोले, वैसे ही टूना एक पोटेंशियल एक्सपोर्ट करने का, और फॉरेन मनी जेनरेट करने का हमारा एक आधार है। आज तक हमारे स्माल बोट्स जाते रहे और जब इसमें डवलेपमेंट हुई, तो अब जो टूना परपज़ के लिए बोट्स हैं, उनके पास एक स्पेसिफिक लाइट होती है, वह लाइट नीचे डालते हैं, सारी टूना फिश वहां इकट्ठी हो जाती हैं और उनको पकड़ लिया जाता है। उसके साथ-साथ उन्होंने मिड-सी में, हाई-सी में पैकिंग इंडस्ट्री, पूरी फिश इंडस्ट्री बैठायी हुई है, जो कि छोटे-छोटे स्ट्रोलर्स जाकर ..।

श्री सभापति: क्वेश्चन प्लीज।

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया: सर, मैं सवाल पर आ रहा हूं। वह जाकर वहां पर सप्लाई करते हैं। ऐसी फिश फैक्टरी डीप-सी में हमने कितनी लगायी हैं? मेरा दूसरा प्रश्न यह है कि ओ.एन.जी.सी. में डीप-सी पर जो हमारे ऑयल इंस्टालेशन सेंटर्स हैं, वहां पर छह महीने उसके एम्पलाईज़ को काम करना पड़ता है और छह महीने की छुट्टी मिलती है, वैसा प्रावधान देकर क्या हम टूना फिश कैचर्स, जो हमारे फिशरमैन हैं, उन लोगों को ऐसी फिश इंडस्ट्री में लगाया जा सकता है या उसकी वैसी ट्रेनिंग दी जा सकती है, क्या इस तरह का कोई प्रावधान रखा है?

श्री शरद पवार: महोदय, इस बात पर ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता है कि यह एंटायर धंधा गैर-सरकारी है, सरकारी नहीं है। यहां जो ONGC का उदाहरण दिया

गया है, वह तो सैमी गवर्नमेंट आर्गनाइजेशन है। वहां गवर्नमेंट की नीति यह तय करती है कि आप 6 महीने यहां काम करेंगे और 6 महीने आराम करेंगे या छुट्टी लेंगे। Each and every entrepreneur is a private entrepreneur. That is why they have to take that decision. The real problem is the non-availability of the trained staff. Here, we have taken two steps. Firstly, from 25 per cent, we have brought it down to 15 per cent. If there is a demand that we should give a second thought to it, I have said that I am ready to take some decision in this area. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया: क्या आप ट्रेनिंग के लिए institutes बनाएंगे?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: There are institutes. We have provided training facilities in these institutes, which are in Mumbai, Cochin, Chennai, etc. The only thing is that sufficient number of youngsters are not going to these institutes. So, we have to introduce some scholarships and a number of other things so that the local youngsters go there, get trained and fulfil the requirements of this country.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

Revival of MFL

*182. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:††
SHRI MOHAMMED AMIN:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Madras Fertilizers Limited (MFL) has been referred to BIFR and if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether, as per the recommendation of BRPSE, if financial restructuring proposal to make the operation of the company viable has been finalized; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and other steps being taken to revive MFL?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) A Satement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Madras Fertilizers Limited (MFL) produces Ammonia, Urea and Complex fertilizers (NPK) based on Naphtha as feedstock. The cost of production of urea in respect of MFL is highest in the country. Though the price concession rates enjoyed by the MFL is highest, it is not able to cover the actual cost of production and hence, the company continues to incur losses. Without the availability of gas, operations of MFL cannot be viable. Due to the continued losses, the net worth of the company has completely eroded. A reference was made to BIFR as a statutory requirement by the company and pursuant to this, it has been registered as a sick company by the BIFR.

Based on the recommendations made by the BRPSE and expected availability of gas by 2010-11, a financial restructuring proposal to make the operation of the company viable is under the active consideration of the Government.

†† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Tapan Kumar Sen.